



1 SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois Senate are saddened to  
3 learn of the death of Elmer Jenkins of Benton, Illinois, who  
4 passed away on November 3, 2006; and

5 WHEREAS, He was born May 5, 1920, in Westville, to Anna  
6 (Lepengy) and Fred Jenkins; and

7 WHEREAS, Elmer could read before he began grammar school,  
8 and he read the newspaper to people who gathered at the  
9 neighborhood grocery in the morning; and

10 WHEREAS, He was Benton High School class president all four  
11 years and played violin in the school orchestra; he later  
12 taught himself to play the clarinet; Elmer loved classical  
13 music and New Orleans Dixieland, and his favorite song was  
14 clarinetist Pete Fountain's rendition of "Just a Closer Walk  
15 with Thee"; and

16 WHEREAS, Following his high school graduation, Elmer  
17 joined the United States Navy, serving at sea as part of the  
18 engine room "black gang" crew; while in the Navy and prior to  
19 World War II, he sailed U.S. ships as part of the United States  
20 Lend Lease effort; he completed his Navy tour serving on a  
21 tugboat based in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, having traversed the  
22 Panama Canal eight times; and

23 WHEREAS, He entered the University of Illinois after his  
24 tour of duty, but left school the day after Pearl Harbor was  
25 bombed by the Japanese and signed up for air cadet training in  
26 the U.S. Army Air Corps; he earned his wings and was  
27 commissioned as an officer; during World War II, Elmer served  
28 in Australia and the Philippines as a test and transport pilot  
29 with the 5th Air Force, 15th Air Depot Group; he flew nurses  
30 out of a Japanese prison camp in the Philippines, supervised

1 the reassembly of P-47s that had come from the United States,  
2 carried parts and retrieved downed planes, tested newly  
3 repaired planes, and flew almost every airship in our country's  
4 arsenal, his favorite was the P-38; while in the Army Air  
5 Corps, Elmer met two fellow servicemen who became special  
6 friends for a lifetime: Joe Kirkham and Danny Scruggs; Elmer  
7 left the service with the rank of captain; and

8 WHEREAS, Upon returning from World War II, he entered the  
9 University of Illinois College of Law; and

10 WHEREAS, While he was attending law school, he held down  
11 three jobs to pay expenses and support his growing family;  
12 after he graduated from law school and successfully passed the  
13 Illinois bar exam, Elmer worked for the Federal Bureau of  
14 Investigation in its Kansas City, Missouri office; he later  
15 returned to Benton, where he entered private practice in 1948;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, For many years, Elmer was retained by Freeman Coal  
18 Company as its compensation attorney; early in his professional  
19 career as an attorney, Elmer clerked for the Illinois Supreme  
20 Court, and in 2003, he was named an Illinois State Bar  
21 Association laureate; and

22 WHEREAS, He was a member of the Benton Masonic Lodge, a  
23 75-year member of the First Baptist Church of Benton, and was a  
24 Shriner; he enjoyed golf, skiing, traveling, his dogs, trail  
25 riding on horseback, gardening, the Benton Rangers, and seeing  
26 the St. Louis Cardinals win the World Series; and

27 WHEREAS, Elmer Jenkins was preceded in death by his parents  
28 and his brother, Louis; he is survived by his wife, Lois  
29 Jenkins; his daughters, Nancy Hobbs and her husband, Larry,  
30 Patty Novara, Ellen Curry and her husband, David, and Kathleen  
31 DaNato and her husband, Rick; his stepchildren, Mark Samuels,

1 Lyndy Girten and her husband, Don, and Terrie Vercellino and  
2 her husband, Steve; his many grandchildren and  
3 great-grandchildren; his brother, Fred; and his many friends;  
4 therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL  
6 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we mourn, along with  
7 his family and friends, the passing of Elmer Jenkins; and be it  
8 further

9 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
10 presented to the family of Elmer Jenkins.